

still hoped to see averted, MacDonald and Henderson, from the offices of the Labour Party, took the initiative in summoning a Conference of all sections of the movement, in all its branches. This Conference was designed to bring into being a Workers<sup>5</sup> Peace Emergency Committee, to take concerted action to keep the peace. So swiftly did events move, however, that when the Conference actually met, on August 5th, war had already been declared. MacDonald, after making, in the House of Commons, a speech on lines agreed to by the parliamentary party as a whole, found the majority gone from behind him. He resigned his leadership and was replaced by Arthur Henderson.

It was Arthur Henderson, therefore, who presided over a Conference to which came representatives of the Trade Union Congress, the Labour Party, the General Federation of Trade Unions, the Miners<sup>9</sup> Federation, the Railwaymen, the Textile Workers, the Transport Workers, the Co-operative Movement, the Teachers, and the Socialist Societies. Among notable individual members of the Executive body set up by this Conference—a body called, in view of the altered circumstances, the War Emergency Workers' National Committee—were Robert Smillie, Mary Macarthur, W C Anderson, Arthur Henderson, J Ramsay MacDonald, J A Seddon, William Brace, H M Hyndman and Sidney Webb, with J S Middleton as secretary. This Committee—the most representative body set up in the history of the Labour Movement, including as it did the largest possible

range of diverse personalities and points of  
view—actually  
met two and even three times a week during the  
early months  
of the war, and, throughout its course,  
normally once a  
week. Its minutes provided local labour  
parties and trade  
councils throughout the country with guidance  
and the  
Conferences it organised exercised a most  
important influ-  
ence in guiding opinion and even in affecting  
Government  
policy